	Monthly Security Tips Newsletter March 2008

CISO Tips

*ALERT: The State security policy Web site has been updated to indicate "new" or "revised" documents and revision dates. Please log on to the Website to view the changes. Please watch for all updates and thoroughly review for impact.

Trojan malware installed on customer PCs, in the form of key-loggers, are very common. Where applicable on your Web sites, please make your customers and employees aware of the possibility in order to combat loss of sensitive data.

Remember to protect your home computer from access to unsafe and undesirable sites.
Try Blue Coat's™ free home offering at http://www1.k9webprotection.com/;

To view State security policies, please visit: http://isd.alabama.gov/policies/policies.aspx?sm=c_a;

Annual Maintenance For Computers

Perform Annual Maintenance in Conjunction with Daylight Savings Time Change
In addition to your routine security and maintenance processes, you should perform an annual PC "tune up" or maintenance to be sure that your computer is operating efficiently, that appropriate software updates and settings have been applied and to minimize the risk of losing your data. Performing your annual check up with the switch to Daylight Savings Time is a great way to develop an annual schedule. One important step to take before performing maintenance is to back up all your data, in case anything goes wrong during your maintenance.

System and Data Backups - Review, update and test your file backup process.
- If you do not have a backup system, consider purchasing a portable back up hard drive.
- Check your scheduled "backup" scheme to see if it is still applicable. Add folders and files to be backed up as necessary.
- Test the restore function for the backed up files to ensure the restore works properly. Create a folder on you computer and restore your back up to the folder. Afterwards, delete the test folder.

Firewall - Check firewall settings to check for a current licensed version and updates.
- Review settings for product configurations. Confirm settings are appropriate for the current level of security needed.
- Review firewall settings to ensure they are configured for automatic updates (if available), known applications are allowed, known inappropriate sites are blocked and known port scans are blocked.
- Confirm that the firewall is updated and that the license is current (if applicable).

Internet Browser - Check your browser configuration to ensure you have appropriate secure zone settings.
- Review current zone settings (Tools/Internet Options/Security tab) for appropriate levels. The minimum level of security should be the default level which is set at Medium-High for the Internet zone. Adjustments can be made based on your needs.

- Confirm "Automatic Update" settings for your browser are set properly (applied at least weekly or as available).

Anti-Virus, Anti-Spam, and Anti-Spyware - Check all products for current versions and updates.
- Confirm "Automatic Update" settings are set properly (applied at least weekly or as available).Confirm that applicable updates have been applied and that you have current versions and updates for all products. You may need to visit the vendor site for details.
- Confirm that your software licenses are current (if applicable).
- Run complete virus and anti-spyware scans on all drives. This should be done on a weekly basis.

Other Computer Software - Update other frequently used software programs, especially those that interface with the Internet.
- Some software programs have "Automatic Update" features, others do not. Check your software programs (media players, music players, Adobe, etc.) for updates and new software versions. Follow the instructions within each program for updating.

The recommendations below are designed for Windows XP Operating System (since this the most prevalent operating system) and thus some steps may be slightly different with other Windows operating systems.

Operating System - Check for updates and remove unneeded programs.
- Confirm that the "Automatic Update" settings are set properly (applied at least weekly or as available). Confirm that Applicable updates (Critical, Important) have been applied to your operating system (Settings/Control Panel/Add or Remove Programs and click Show updates).
- Remove old System Restore Points – Use Start/Control Panel/System/System Restore tab, check "Turn off System Restore" box to remove all restore points except the most recent.
- Remove unneeded programs and "trial" programs. Go to Settings/Control Panel/Add or Remove Programs to uninstall a program.

Hard Disk Drive Maintenance - Ensure your hard disk is operating at peak efficiency.
- Scan your Hard Disk for errors. In Windows Explorer select the drive then right click-Properties/Tools/Check Now/. Check "Automatically fix file system errors" and "Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors."
- Defragment your Hard Disk Drive. The data on your hard drive can get separated or fragmented and therefore makes your computer less efficient. Defragmenting physically reorganizing the data to store the pieces of each file close together for more efficient storage and retrieval. In Windows Explorer select the drive then right click-Properties/Tools/Defrag Now.
- Remove old files and emails on your PC. Remember to empty the "Recycle Bin" or "Deleted Items" (Outlook) folders.
- Clean up your disk to remove cookies, temp files, cache, and history files. Go to Start/Program/Accessories/System Tools/Disk Cleanup.

Additional resources for PC maintenance can be found at:

Microsoft PC Care Online: www.microsoft.com/athome/moredone/maintenance.mspx
Microsoft Backup Utility: http://support.microsoft.com/kb/308422/

For more monthly tips visit: www.msisac.org/awareness/news/ or www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips

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http://www.msisac.org